

The *rayajis* either own the village lands or are the depend-ants or \*serfs of a Kurdish Agha or master. In either case their condition is deplorable, for they have practically no rights which a Kurd or Turk is bound to respect. In some of their villages they have been robbed till they are absolutely without the means of paying taxes, and are beaten, till the fact is established beyond dispute. They are but scantily supplied with the necessities of life, though their industry produces abundance. Squeezed between the rapacity and violence of the Kurds and the exactions of the Turkish officials, who *undoubtedly connive at outrages so long as the victims are Christians*, the condition of these Syrians is one of the most pitiable on earth. They have no representatives in the cities of Europe and Asia, and no commercial instincts and habits like the Armenians. They have the Oriental failings of untruthfulness and avarice, and the cunning begotten by centuries of oppression, but otherwise they are simple, grossly ignorant, helpless shepherds and cultivators; aliens by race and creed, without a rich or capable man among them, hemmed in by some of the most inaccessible of mountain ranges, and by their oppressors the Kurds; without a leader, adviser, or friend, rarely visited by travellers, with no voice which can reach Europe, with a present of intolerable bondage and a future without light, and yet through all clinging passionately to the faith received by tradition from their fathers.

As I have no lodging but a dark stable, I  
am utilis-  
ing the late afternoon, sitting by the village  
threshing-  
floor, on which a mixed rabble of animals is  
treading  
corn. Some buffaloes are lying in moist  
places looking  
amiable and foolish. *Boy* is tied to my  
chair. The  
village women knit and stare. Two of the  
men, armed  
with matchlock guns, keep a look-out for the  
Kurds. A  
crystal stream tumbles through the village,  
over ledges